



# Department of Justice

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## **PAIR SENTENCED FOR INTERNET CAR SALES SCAM**

*Took over \$60,000 in four months from nearly 30 victims across U.S.*

DAYTON - Christopher Sean Justin, age 31, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, and April Bates, age 23, of Gulfport, Mississippi, were sentenced in United States District Court here today for conspiring to defraud victims by selling cars over the Internet, taking money from the buyers, not delivering the cars, and absconding with the money. In a four-month period, they took more than \$60,000 from 29 victims around the United States.

Justin received a sentence of 18 months imprisonment followed by three years of supervised release. Bates was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment. Both were ordered to pay restitution to victims in the amount of \$60,206.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Stanley J. Borgia, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cincinnati Field Division, announced the sentences handed down today by United States District Judge Thomas M. Rose.

Justin and Bates traveled around the country between November 2004 and February 2005, staying in local motels and advertising cars various auto-related Websites. Justin claimed to be a member of the military and said he was trying to sell the cars before being shipped overseas. Victims sent the pair money, usually in the form of cashiers checks. Justin and Bates would cash the checks and leave the area without delivering any cars to their victims. They conducted part of the scheme while staying at a hotel in the Dayton area.

FBI agents in Dayton obtained an arrest warrant for the pair on February 17, 2005. That same day, officers with the Colorado State Highway Patrol stopped the pair near Georgetown, Colorado and arrested them after a computer check turned up the federal arrest warrant.

The U.S. Marshals Service brought them back to Dayton where Justin has remained in custody. Bates was released on bond.

Bates pled guilty on April 12, 2005 and Justin pled guilty on August 5, 2005 to a one-count information charging them with conspiracy to commit mail fraud and wire fraud.

"This case reinforces the fact that people who buy goods over the Internet must exercise the same diligence and caution as they would if purchasing items from someone face-to-face," Lockhart said.

Lockhart commended the cooperative efforts between FBI agents and local law enforcement for their successful investigation of the case and Assistant U.S. Attorney Vipal Patel who prosecuted the case.

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